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Chairman
4th District, Oklahoma

*House meets at 9:30 a.m. for Morning Hour and
11:00 a.m. for Legislative Business*

Anticipated Floor Action:

**H.Res. 465 - Encouraging Governments to Disseminate Statistics on the
Number of Abandoned Babies**

H.R. 4051 - Project Exile: The Safe Streets and Neighborhoods Act

H.R. 1658 - Civil Assets Forfeiture Reform Act

H.R. 3767 - Visa Waiver Permanent Program Act

**S.Con.Res. 71 - The Sense of Congress that Miami, Florida Should Serve as
the Permanent Location for the Secretariat of the FTAA**

H.Res. 467 - Sense of Congress on Clinton/Gore Tax Hikes

H.R. 4067 - Business Checking Modernization Act

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Bills Considered Under Suspension of the Rules

Floor Situation: The House will consider the following seven bills under suspension of the rules as its first order of business today. Each is debatable for 40 minutes, may not be amended, and requires a two-thirds majority vote for passage.

H. Res. 465 expresses the sense of the House that local, State, and Federal statistics should be kept on the number of babies abandoned in public places. Currently, national statistics on the number of infants born and abandoned in hospitals is kept, but the number of newborn babies left in dumpsters, trash bins, alleys, warehouses, bathrooms, and other public places is unknown. Since April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, Congress should take the opportunity to direct attention to raise awareness of the problem of newborn babies abandoned in public places. Introduced by Ms. Johnson on April 6, 2000.

H.R. 4051 attempts to reduce crime by more vigorous enforcement of existing laws and increasing the penalties for committing crimes while carrying a gun. It establishes a grant program that will provide incentives for States to enact mandatory minimum sentences for certain firearms offenses and public awareness campaigns. The bill provides a total of \$100 million dollars over five years to states that implement mandatory sentencing programs for criminals who carry a firearm during and in relation to a violent crime. The money will help to implement the program and defray costs associated with increased enforcement. The funds will be used to hire and train more judges, prosecutors, and probation officers as well as fund gun while committing a violent felony or trafficking drugs, (2) creating publicity campaigns and (3) cooperating with federal prosecutors.

H.R. 4051 authorizes \$10 million in the first year (FY 2001), \$15 million in the second year, \$20 million in the third year, \$25 million in the fourth year, and \$30 million in the final year. Each state is allotted a portion of the funds based on its relative amount of violent crime for all qualifying states based on a percentage of the total violent crime reported to the FBI for the three years preceding the year in which the determination is made. States must provide assurances that they will allocate their resources with the purpose of addressing crime in its highest crime areas. A CBO cost estimate was unavailable at press time. Introduced by Mr. McCollum on March 22, 2000.

H. R. 1658 makes a number of reforms to the federal civil forfeiture procedures. The bill increases protections for property owners but also preserves the ability of law enforcement and the courts to seize property. The bill shifts the burden of proof throughout forfeiture proceedings from individuals who have had their property seized to the federal government. It places reasonable time limits on the government to reach a final disposition of civil forfeiture cases and awards attorneys' fees and costs to individuals who prevail against the federal government. H. R. 1658 also authorizes the court to release property pending trial in appropriate situations and eliminates the cost bond and replaces it with other assurances to the government and courts. The bill provides a uniform innocent owner defense to all federal civil forfeiture cases. In addition, H. R. 1658 strengthens the ability of the Department of Justice to deprive criminals of the proceeds of their criminal activity. The bill extends criminal forfeiture authority to any federal statute where civil forfeiture authority now exists and contains several mechanisms for deterring frivolous claims to seized property. Introduced by Mr. Hyde *et. al.* on May 4, 1999.

H.R. 3767 makes the Visa Waiver Pilot Program (VWPP) permanent. This ends the program's 14-year "pilot" status. The bill is designed to make improvements in "performance and management." New provisions would: (1) strengthen the requirement that participating countries issue machine-readable passports; (2) prohibit the Attorney General from paroling inadmissible aliens who apply for admission under the VWP; (3) provide for ongoing evaluation of participating countries (at least every 5 years); (4) allow for emergency rescission of visa waiver status under certain conditions; and (5) require that entry/exit control data be collected under the VWP at air and sea ports of entry. A CBO cost estimate was not available at press time. Introduced by Mr. Smith *et. al.* on March 1, 2000.

H.R. 4163 simplifies the complicated process of paying taxes by waiving IRS penalties in some cases, protecting taxpayer privacy, and helping to level the playing field between the IRS and taxpayers. It builds on the 1998 IRS Restructuring and Reform Act (*P.L. 105-206*), which was the first reform of the IRS since 1952. Specifically, this measure helps protect taxpayer privacy by: (1) protecting against computer hackers and illegal disclosures by requiring states to tighten safeguards for contractors that have access to tax return information; (2) requiring immediate notification to taxpayers by the IRS if tax information is obtained illegally by third parties; (3) improving notification to taxpayers of undelivered refund checks; and

(4) toughening consent requirements for access to tax return information by banks and lenders.

Secondly, the bill levels the playing field by (1) allowing interest on past-due taxes to be waived if the IRS makes mistakes or causes unreasonable delays; (2) making IRS interest payments tax free; (3) giving taxpayers a four month period to enter into an installment agreement without a penalty; and (4) allowing taxpayers to limit their exposure to underpayment interest by using a dispute reserve account.

Finally, the bill simplifies the tax paying process by simplifying the calculation of estimated tax by providing for one interest rate per underpayment period and by converting the current penalty for failure to pay estimated tax into an interest charge. The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that enactment of H.R. 4163 will cost \$2.1 billion through FYs 2000-2005. H.R. 4163 was reported by the Committee on Ways & Means by voice vote on April 5, 2000.

S.Con.Res. 71 expresses the sense of Congress that President Clinton should direct the U.S. representative to the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations to use all available means to make Miami, Florida, as the permanent site of the FTAA Secretariat after February 28, 2005. Introduced by Mssrs. Graham and Mack on November 8, 1999.

H.Res. 467 expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that despite (1) having successfully balanced the budget and created budget surpluses; (2) having protected Social Security and restored the integrity of the Social Security Trust Fund; (3) the fact that in 1999 governments at all levels collected \$9,562 in taxes for every man, woman and child; (4) the fact that our tax burden is at 20.0 percent of Gross Domestic Product - a post World War II record high; and (5) the fact that our oversight activities have identified billions of taxpayer's dollars that are subject to waste, fraud and abuse, the Congress should support the adoption of the package of tax and user fee increases proposed by the Clinton-Gore Administration in their FY2001 budget (as re-estimated by the Joint Committee on Taxation). The Clinton-Gore Administration FY2001 budget includes an increase of \$3.2 billion in Medicare premiums and other health costs, a \$1.5 billion increase in energy costs, a \$3.5 billion increase in the death tax, and an additional increase of \$12.8 billion on insurance products. The bill was introduced by Mr. Terry on April 10, 2000.

H.R. 4067 repeals the prohibition of banks from offering interest bearing checking accounts to businesses. The bill provides a three-year transition period before taking effect. In the interim, banks would be allowed to make up to 24 transfer transactions a month to another account, an increase from the current number of six. This increase allows banks to more easily transfer assets between interest bearing accounts and non-interest bearing checking accounts. The bill was introduced by Mr. Metcalf on March 23, 2000.

Additional Information: See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXIX, #10, April 7, 2000.

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